

About Art



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A work of art can be good or bad depending on what says, how he says it, and how sincerely from his heart an artist speaks.

In order for the work of art to be perfect, it is necessary that what the artist says should be completely new and important for all people, that what is expressed should be beautiful enough, and that the artist should speak from his inner need and therefore speak quite truthfully.

In order for that what the artist says to be completely new and important, it is necessary for the artist to be a morally enlightened person, and therefore not to live a selfish life, but to be a participant in the common life of mankind.

In order for that what the artist says to be expressed well enough, it is necessary for the artist to master his skill to the degree that during his work he would think very little about the rules of this craft, just as little a person during his walk thinks about the rules of mechanics.

And in order to achieve this, an artist must never look back at his work, admire it, must not make technique his aim, as one who is walking should not contemplate and admire his gait.

And in order for the artist to express his inner need of soul and therefore to say what he says from his heart, he must, firstly, not to engage in many trivialities preventing to truly love what is natural to love, and secondly, to love himself, with his own heart, not with somebody's, and not to pretend that he loves what others recognize or feel worthy of love. And to achieve this, the artist must do what Balaam did when the messengers came to him and he went in seclusion awaiting for God, in order to say only what God commands, and he must not do what the same Balaam did when, tempted by gifts, he went to the king against God's command, which was evident even to the ass he rode, although he, being blinded by greediness and vanity, did not see that.

Based on the extent to which the artwork reaches perfection in each of these three areas, follows the distinction of the merits of some works from others. The works of art can be

1. significant, beautiful, and not too heartfelt or sincere; can be
2. significant, not too beautiful, and not too heartfelt or sincere; can be
3. not too significant, beautiful, and heartfelt and sincere,

etc. in all combinations and alterations.

All of these pieces of art have their virtues, but may not be recognized as perfect works of art. The perfect work of art will only be that in which the content will be significant and new, and the expression of it - quite beautiful, and the relation of the artist to the work - quite heartfelt and therefore quite sincere. Such works have always been and always will be rare. Still all the other pieces, imperfect by themselves, can be divided, based on the basic art conditions, on the three main types:

1. those which stand out by the significance of their contents,
2. those which stand out by their beauty of form, and
3. those which stand out by their heartfelt sincerity,

but neither of them is reaching the same excellence in other two areas.

All three of these kinds constitute an approximation to the perfect art and are inevitably produced wherever there is art. Among young artists heartfelt sincerity chiefly prevails, coupled with insignificance of content and more or less beauty of form. Among older artists, on the contrary, the importance of the content often predominates over beauty of form and sincerity. Among hard-working artists beauty of form predominates over content and sincerity.

Based on the three conditions of art, there are three major false art theories, based on which works, not connecting in themselves all three conditions and therefore standing on the borders of art, are recognized not only as works, but also as exemplars of art.

1. One of these theories recognize that the value of art depends mainly

on the content, even if the work does not have in itself the form of beauty and sincerity. This is the so-called 'tendentious' art.

2. Another recognizes the value of a work of art in the beauty of form, even when the content of the piece is negligible and the attitude of the artist to it is devoid of sincerity; this is the theory of 'art for art's sake'.
3. The third one recognizes that it's all a matter of heartfelt sincerity, in truthfulness, that, no matter how insignificant the content and imperfect form is, as long as the artist loves what he expresses, this would be the work of art. This theory is a theory of 'realism.'

And so, because of these false theories, the works of art do not appear, like in the old days, by one or two for each field at a time span of one generation, but they appear each year in each capital city (where there are many idle people) in hundreds of thousand pieces of so-called art in all its fields.

Nowadays, a person who wishes to engage in art does not wait until in his soul something important would rise, a new content that he would truly love, and having loved it, he would give it an appropriate form, but he either based on the first theory takes a subject currently appraised by smart, according to his understanding, people and wraps it as best as he can in art forms; or based on the second theory chooses a subject in which he is more likely to demonstrate his technical skill, and with diligence and patience produces what he considers a piece of art. Or, according to the third theory, having received a good impression, takes what he liked as a subject of this work, imagining that it would be a piece of art because he liked it. And so there appear a countless quantity of so-called works of art which, as in every mechanical craft, can be produced without the least intermission: there are always current fashionable notions in society, and with patience a technique can always be learned, and somebody always likes something.

And that caused the strange situation of our time, in which our whole world is cluttered with works, claiming to be the works of art, yet differing from handicraft only in that they are not only needless, but are often completely harmful.

This caused the extraordinary phenomenon which clearly indicate the confusion of notions about art, that there is no so-called work of art that would not cause at the same time two directly opposite opinions from people equally educated and influential. This caused an amazing phenomenon that most people, indulging in the most stupid, useless and often immoral occupations, i.e. producing and reading books, producing and looking at pictures, producing and listening to musical and theatrical plays and concerts, quite sincerely believe that they are doing something very clever, useful and superior.

It is as if the people of our time told to themselves: the works of art are good and useful, it is necessary, therefore, to produce more of them. Indeed, it would be very good if there were more of them, but the trouble is that on request you can only do those works which, due to the absence of all three conditions of art, due to the disjointing of these conditions, are demoted to crafts.

But the real work of art, which includes all three conditions, cannot be produced on demand, it is impossible because the state of mind of the artist, from which the work of art emerges, is the highest expression of awareness, the revelation of the mysteries of life. If this state is a higher knowledge, then there can be no other knowledge that could lead the artist to the understanding of this higher knowledge.